



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

1430 N STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CA  
95814-5901

**JACK O'CONNELL**  
State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction  
PHONE: (916) 319-0800

December 8, 2003

Dear Chief Examiners, Alternate Examiners, Proctors, and Testing Center Staff:

**GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED)  
DECEMBER 2003 UPDATE**

**California Policy Correcting Bubble Errors on GED Answer Sheets**

Incorrect bubbling causes significant delays in California's GED scoring system, which depends on high-speed processing for scoring in a timely manner. To correct bubble errors, the scoring vendor must manually extract answer sheets from thousands of other paper documents and correct the error by hand. Correcting these errors takes time away from scanning answer sheets completed correctly and translates into overall processing delays statewide. Correcting bubble errors on the actual test sheet could also compromise test security or call into question the integrity of scoring. Therefore, the Chief Examiner or an Alternate Examiner should review the answer sheets prior to sending them to the scoring contractor.

Each examinee is responsible for correctly bubbling the GED demographic sheets and answer sheets. In turn, testing center personnel are responsible for assuring that demographic and answer sheet(s) are correctly bubbled before they are submitted to the scoring contractor.

Effective April 1, 2004, examinee errors that delay scoring or result in the incorrect scoring of an answer sheet will no longer be corrected. These examinees will receive a score of zero and must take a different form of the test when they retest. Bubbling errors of this type include:

- bubbling in the wrong test form or format code;
- bubbling answers in the wrong column or in the wrong test section;
- writing the essay on an answer sheet with a different litho code than the answer sheet with the multiple-choice answers;
- writing the essay on paper other than the answer sheet;
- bubbling the wrong topic letter; and
- not bubbling in a topic letter.

In order to maintain test security, answer sheets are never returned to testing centers. Bubbling errors that do not affect test security may be corrected by submitting the appropriate form to the scoring vendor. The center will be charged for these corrections. Bubbling errors of this type include:

- creating two records for one examinee in the scoring contractor's computer system;
- test date bubble errors; and
- name/identification number/address/birth date bubble errors.

Note that correction forms do not have a place for correcting birth date errors. To correct these errors, use the "Name and Address Change" form. Fill in today's date, the name fields, and the identification number field. The corrected birth date should be entered in the birth date field, and the words "birth date" should be highlighted to indicate the change.

The scoring vendor will attempt to contact testing center staff to resolve these bubbling errors for a period of 30 days. If attempts to contact testing center staff are unsuccessful, the answer sheet will be destroyed after the 30-day period. The examinee will have to re-test with a different form of the test.

For further questions regarding correcting bubble errors on GED answer sheets, please contact Monte Blair, Education Programs Consultant, Standards and Assessment Division, State GED Office, at (916) 319-0357.

### **Change of Mailing Address**

In an effort to cut operating costs, an administrative decision recently was made to eliminate the use of post office boxes throughout the California Department of Education (CDE). Therefore, effective immediately, all correspondence to the State GED Office should be mailed to the following street address:

State GED Office  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street, Suite 5408  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

### **Training Dates**

Enclosed is a registration form for the January series of trainings for new GED Examiners and Proctors. The two-day training sessions are scheduled in Sacramento, Fremont, Fresno, Paramount, and Escondido and run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. All new staff must attend at least one state training. While the sessions are geared for new staff, experienced examiners and proctors are also welcome to attend. Maps and directions to the trainings are enclosed. If there are any questions, please contact Nancy J. Goodrich, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, State GED Office, at (916) 445-8049 or (800) 331-6316.

### **Spanish Cutoff Dates**

The GED Testing Service has announced that partial scores from the Spanish language and French-language tests will remain valid only through December 31, 2003. After that date, when the 2004 series of the Spanish language and French language GED Tests become available, all partial scores obtained prior to that date will become invalid.

Educational Testing Service (ETS), the GED scoring contractor for California, indicates that they will score answer sheets for the current Spanish language series that are received through January 2, 2004. Answer sheets received by ETS after January 2, 2004, will not be scored. There will be no exceptions to this rule. The due date for submitting Spanish language answer sheets must be strictly enforced because ETS will not be able to score new tests until they have finished scoring the current series for all examinees. Once ETS stops scoring the current series, they must install the new scoring software and test it before scoring the 2004 Spanish language test series. This change will take several weeks. Therefore, centers are encouraged to inform Spanish language test takers who test in early January 2004 that their results may be delayed. To allow enough time to submit all 2003 answer sheets for the Spanish language test and have them scored, the CDE State GED Office recommends that local GED Test Centers stop offering the Current Spanish series no later than December 19, 2003.

There may be some Spanish language examinees that will need to complete their testing in the latter part of December. During that period, local GED Test Centers should only be testing Spanish examinees that are going to complete the series before the end of the year. If a local GED test center is going to administer the Spanish language test in the latter part of December, please let ETS know in advance so that they may be prepared. Do not administer any portion of the current Spanish language series after December 31, 2003.

It is very important that centers not combine answer sheets from the two different series. The answer sheets for the current Spanish language test must be submitted separately from answer sheets for the 2004 Spanish language series.

### **2003 Spanish Language Testing Materials**

We are beginning to see an increase in Spanish testing as we move closer to the end of the year and the last weeks of administering the current generation of Spanish tests. In an effort to accommodate testing centers that will need more Spanish test batteries, leases for Spanish batteries for 2003 will be one half of their standard lease price, effective immediately. If your center needs to order additional batteries, please have them use the enclosed Order Form. The form may be faxed to Tara Gross at the GED Testing Service at (202) 659-8875.

### **GED Testing Service Ships 2004 Materials**

Many testing centers have already received their 2004 materials from the GED Testing Service. Attached to this memorandum are lists of testing center identification numbers and the United Postal Service (UPS) tracking number affiliated with each center identification number. If you have not yet received your materials, use the number

associated with your test centers Identification number to check the status of your shipment at the UPS Web site at <[www.ups.com](http://www.ups.com)>. This list is current as of November 20, 2003; additional orders may be shipped after this date. If you have further questions about the status of your 2004 GED testing materials, please contact the shipping staff at the GED Testing Service at (202) 939-9490.

Please remember that the 2004 materials may not be used prior to January of 2004, and 2003 materials may not be used after December of 2003. Use your 2003 materials through your last testing date this year. After this test date is complete, plan to return your 2003 materials to the GED Testing Service as soon as possible, using the secure white carton in which your 2004 materials were shipped. *This includes all secure testing materials, including test booklets of all languages, topic cards of all languages, and special editions of the GED test.* No testing center has permission to keep materials from year to year, and GED Testing Service is now tracking centers that do not return materials. Centers are *not* required to return answer sheets, demographic sheets or calculators. For further questions regarding returning GED materials, please contact Nancy J. Goodrich, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Standards and Assessment Division, State GED Office, at (800) 331-6316.

#### **ETS Holiday Essay Reading Schedule**

Enclosed please find a message from ETS that explains their schedule during the holidays.

Sincerely,

Mark Fetler, State GED Administrator  
Standards and Assessment Division

MF:ng  
Enclosures